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Positive Attitude Is Your Key To Success

First, let me say it is a great honor to have been chosen as YOUR United States Army Armor Center and Fort Knox Command Sergeant Major. I can assure you I have not forgotten where I started and will do everything in my power to help you improve yourselves professionally. Together we will make the Armor Community a better place for all.

We are well into the many missions of the New Year and are performing all training tasks to the highest standard. As we continue to serve our great nation, we must continually reevaluate our attitude so we maintain the proper level of motivation, esprit de corps and 'drive on spirit' required to be successful. Our duties can be very demanding and may, at times, seem much to bear. Your attitude, though, will remain the key component in determining the way

you approach your duties and how you relate to those serving around you, good or bad.

Attitude is a reflection of the person inside. While the external circumstances in your life may seem hectic, you can always chart a path of excellence by assuming a positive mental attitude. There are many historical examples of how a strong positive attitude can be the difference between triumph and defeat.

Major General Joshua L. Chamberlain was a self-taught college professor from Maine who volunteered for service in the Union Army during the War Between the States (Civil War). During the Battle of Gettysburg, then-Colonel Chamberlain led the 20th Maine Infantry Regiment to the defense of Little Round Top and ultimately saved the day for the Army of the Potomac. For his action, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. In his career, he was wounded six times and contracted malaria, but always returned to lead his men in the most arduous of situations.

Later in life, Major General Chamberlain served as president of Bowdoin College and four-term governor of the state of Maine. Chamberlain's rich life can clearly be attributed to his attitude of tackling the toughest situations.

Another great example of how far a positive attitude can take you is the British Antarctic explorer, Lieutenant Ernest Shackleton. Although he failed

several attempts to reach the South Pole, Shackleton remained vigilant in his quest. Ultimately, a Norwegian explorer achieved the goal before him. However, the unfettered Shackleton challenged himself again with an even greater quest, to be the first to cross the Antarctic continent.

On the way to the coast to begin the trek, Lieutenant Shackleton's ship became frozen in the ice and sank. What followed was an epic story of survival that included exploits of sailing open lifeboats in winter seas, living off the land and enduring more than 18 months in subfreezing weather!

There have been numerous books written about the adventure, all crediting the crew's miraculous survival to Lieutenant Shackleton's leadership and positive attitude.

While I was in the Balkans, an individual shared this poem with me one afternoon. It reminded me of how important a positive attitude can be during any adverse situation. Read it carefully and reflect on how your perception of life may become easily tainted by not recognizing the goodness in the duties you perform.

I woke up early today, excited over all I get to do before the clock strikes midnight. I have responsibilities to fulfill today. I am important. My job is to choose what kind of day I am going to have.

I am very interested in receiving concerns, comments, and suggestions from soldiers out in the field. Please send all questions and comments to the following email address:

CSM@knox.army.mil

Two or three questions will be selected and featured in each edition of *ARMOR*.

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Today I can complain because the weather is rainy or I can be thankful that the grass is getting watered.

Today I can feel sad that I don't have more money or I can be glad that my finances encourage me to plan my purchases wisely and guide me away from waste.

Today I can grumble about my health or I can rejoice that I am alive.

Today I can lament over all that my parents didn't give me when I was growing up or I can feel grateful that they allowed me to be born.

Today I can mourn my lack of friends or I can excitedly embark upon a quest to discover new relationships.

Today I can whine because I have to go to work or I can shout for joy because I have a job to do.

Today stretches ahead of me, waiting to be shaped. And here I am, the sculptor who gets to do the shaping.

What today will be like is up to me. I get to choose what kind of day I will have!

– Author unknown

As you reflect on these words, I hope you see that your attitudes truly shape the life you lead. Having a great attitude is not the result of having a great life; instead, having a great life is the result of a great attitude! I challenge everyone to maintain a positive attitude and lasting 'drive on spirit' to ensure a secure and stable environment for all of our soldiers and families.

PRIDE IS CONTAGIOUS!!!

CSM William J. Gainey assumed the position of Armor Center Command Sergeant Major on 20 February 2002. He has served as the Command Sergeant Major for several units, including 2-68 Armor and 1-35 Armor, 2d BCT, 1st AD, in Baumholder, Germany; 1st Squadron, 2d ACR, Fort Polk, La.; 2d Bde, 3d ID, Fort Stewart, Ga.; 2d ACR, Fort Polk, La.; and for Eagle Base, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Additionally, he was the Commandant of the Fort Polk and JRTC NCO Academy. CSM Gainey served in Operations Joint Endeavor (IFOR), Joint Guard (SFOR 3), and Joint Forge (SFOR 8) in Bosnia and Herzegovina.